

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for managing content information, comprising:
a peripheral device configured to capture said content information; and
5 an image hub configured to transfer said content information from said
peripheral device to a data destination from which a system user
selectively accesses said content information.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said peripheral device includes one of a
10 digital camera, an imaging device, a computer device, an audio device, and a
portable electronic device.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein said content information includes at
least one of image data, audio data, text data, and graphics data.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein said data destination includes a user-
accessible service coupled to one of a distributed computer network, an
Internet network, and a wireless communications network.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein said peripheral device is implemented as
a low-cost digital camera with minimal local memory and limited processing
capabilities, said peripheral device being inoperable without said image hub,
said image hub providing a sole power source for recharging a power supply
in said peripheral device, said image hub also providing a sole transfer means
25 for downloading said content information from said peripheral device.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein said image hub includes at least one of
a central processing unit, a memory device, a display, a recharger module, a
user interface, and one or more input/output interfaces.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein said memory device includes at least one of application software, an operating system, content information, a recharge manager, a network browser, and a display manager.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein said application software includes at least one of a download manager, an upload manager, an editing module, a data manager, miscellaneous routines, and an image selection manager.

9. The system of claim 6 wherein said one or more input/output interfaces include at least one of a network interface, a host computer interface, one or more camera connector interfaces, one or more recharge connector interfaces, a photographic printer interface, a wireless communications interface, a removable storage media interface, and one or more status indicator interfaces.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein said content information includes at least one of image data that corresponds to an image that was captured by said peripheral device, and a corresponding descriptor that identifies said image data as being captured by said peripheral device.

11. The system of claim 1 wherein said peripheral device includes at least one of a data capture subsystem, a viewfinder, and a control module, said control module including at least one of a central processing unit, one or more rechargeable and non-removable batteries, a temporary buffer memory of limited size, and an input/output data transfer connector.

12. The system of claim 1 wherein said system user connects said peripheral device to said image hub, and wherein a download manager in said image hub responsively detects a content-information download event.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein said download manager accesses and transfers said content information from said peripheral device to said image hub in response to detecting said content-information download event.

14. The system of claim 12 wherein a recharge manager and a recharger module from said image hub recharge one or more batteries in said peripheral device in response to said system user connecting said peripheral device to said image hub.

15. The system of claim 13 wherein an application software program in said image hub determines one or more appropriate image management functions for handling said content information.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein said one or more appropriate image management functions include a data routing function performed by an upload manager in said image hub for transferring said content information from said image hub to said data destination, said upload manager performing said data routing function using at least one of a wireless communications data transfer and a hard-wired network data transfer.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein said data routing function includes at least one of recognizing and routing said content information based upon a camera identification parameter that is programmed into said peripheral device and detected by said upload manager, marking said content information with an image identifier tag that is recognized and utilized by either said image hub or said data destination to subsequently provide said content information to said system user, routing said content information to said data destination based upon a hub identifier value corresponding to said image hub, and routing said content information to said data destination based upon destination information entered into said image hub by said system user or by a system operator.

18. The system of claim 15 wherein said one or more appropriate image management functions include at least one of a data editing function in which an editing module in said image hub modifies said content information, and an image selection function in which an image selection manager in said image hub permits said system user to select and order one or more images from said content information by using said image hub.

19. The system of claim 15 wherein said image hub determines whether valid conditions currently exist for performing said one or more appropriate image management functions, said image hub presenting an error message to said system user if valid conditions do not currently exist, said image hub executing said one or more image management functions if valid conditions currently do exist.

20. The system of claim 16 wherein said system user accesses said content information from said data destination, and responsively performs a data utilization procedure with said content information, said data utilization procedure including at least one of a data viewing procedure, a data editing procedure, a data ordering procedure, a data manipulation procedure, a data printing procedure, a data forwarding procedure, and a data downloading procedure.

21. A method for managing content information, comprising the steps of: capturing said content information with a peripheral device; utilizing an image hub to transfer said content information from said peripheral device to a data destination; and accessing said content information from said data destination by a system user.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said peripheral device includes one of a digital camera, an imaging device, a computer device, an audio device, and a portable electronic device.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein said content information includes at least one of image data, audio data, text data, and graphics data.

5 24. The method of claim 21 wherein said data destination includes a user-accessible service coupled to one of a distributed computer network, an Internet network, and a wireless communications network.

10 25. The method of claim 21 wherein said peripheral device is implemented as a low-cost digital camera with minimal local memory and limited processing capabilities, said peripheral device being inoperable without said image hub, said image hub providing a sole power source for recharging a power supply in said peripheral device, said image hub also providing a sole transfer means for downloading said content information from said peripheral
15 device.

20 26. The method of claim 21 wherein said image hub includes at least one of a central processing unit, a memory device, a display, a recharger module, a user interface, and one or more input/output interfaces.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said memory device includes at least one of application software, an operating system, content information, a recharge manager, a network browser, and a display manager.

25 28. The method of claim 27 wherein said application software includes at least one of a download manager, an upload manager, an editing module, a data manager, miscellaneous routines, and an image selection manager.

29. The method of claim 26 wherein said one or more input/output interfaces include at least one of a network interface, a host computer interface, one or more camera connector interfaces, one or more recharge connector interfaces, a photographic printer interface, a wireless communications interface, a removable storage media interface, and one or more status indicator interfaces.

30. The method of claim 21 wherein said content information includes at least one of image data that corresponds to an image that was captured by said peripheral device, and a corresponding descriptor that identifies said image data as being captured by said peripheral device.

31. The method of claim 21 wherein said peripheral device includes at least one of a data capture subsystem, a viewfinder, and a control module, said control module including at least one of a central processing unit, one or more rechargeable and non-removable batteries, a temporary buffer memory of limited size, and an input/output data transfer connector.

32. The method of claim 21 wherein said system user connects said peripheral device to said image hub, and wherein a download manager in said image hub responsively detects a content-information download event.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein said download manager accesses and transfers said content information from said peripheral device to said image hub in response to detecting said content-information download event.

34. The method of claim 32 wherein a recharge manager and a recharger module from said image hub recharge one or more batteries in said peripheral device in response to said system user connecting said peripheral device to said image hub.

35. The method of claim 33 wherein an application software program in said image hub determines one or more appropriate image management functions for handling said content information.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein said one or more appropriate image management functions include a data routing function performed by an upload manager in said image hub for transferring said content information from said image hub to said data destination, said upload manager performing said data routing function using at least one of a wireless communications data transfer and a hard-wired network data transfer.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein said data routing function includes at least one of recognizing and routing said content information based upon a camera identification parameter that is programmed into said peripheral device and detected by said upload manager, marking said content information with an image identifier tag that is recognized and utilized by either said image hub or said data destination to subsequently provide said content information to said system user, routing said content information to said data destination based upon a hub identifier value corresponding to said image hub, and routing said content information to said data destination based upon destination information entered into said image hub by said system user or by a system operator.

38. The method of claim 35 wherein said one or more appropriate image management functions include at least one of a data editing function in which an editing module in said image hub modifies said content information, and an image selection function in which an image selection manager in said image hub permits said system user to select and order one or more images from said content information by using said image hub.

39. The method of claim 35 wherein said image hub determines whether valid conditions currently exist for performing said one or more appropriate image management functions, said image hub presenting an error message to said system user if valid conditions do not currently exist, said image hub
5 executing said one or more image management functions if valid conditions currently do exist.

40. The method of claim 36 wherein said system user accesses said content information from said data destination, and responsively performs a data utilization procedure with said content information, said data utilization
10 procedure including at least one of a data viewing procedure, a data editing procedure, a data ordering procedure, a data manipulation procedure, a data printing procedure, a data forwarding procedure, and a data downloading procedure.

41. A computer-readable medium comprising program instructions for managing content information by performing the steps of:
capturing said content information with a peripheral device;
utilizing an image hub to transfer said content information from said
20 peripheral device to a data destination; and
accessing said content information from said data destination by a system user.

42. A system for managing content information, comprising:
25 means for capturing said content information;
means for transferring said content information from said means for capturing to a data destination; and
means for accessing said content information from said data destination by a system user.